

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 19, 2007

The Honorable James L. Oberstar, Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515

Dear Chairman Oberstar:

We are writing to express our serious concern regarding the amendment proposed by Representative Mario Diaz-Balart to *H.R. 2701, Transportation Energy Security and Climate Change Act of 2007*. Mr. Diaz-Balart's amendment would repeal a provision included in the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (Public Law 109-59, Section 1948)* that prevented the demolition of the Brightman Street Bridge in Fall River, Massachusetts in order to preserve it for pedestrian access and emergency purposes. We adamantly oppose the Diaz-Balart amendment and ask that you also oppose it during the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's consideration of *H.R. 2701* scheduled for tomorrow, June 20th.

The Brightman Street Bridge is one of only two local bridges that connect the city of Fall River with the town of Somerset. The bridge serves as an emergency service route for first responders in the area and without access to it, police, fire, and emergency vehicles would be forced to compete with all other traffic on the only other local bridge. This would greatly inhibit the ability of public safety personnel to respond to incidents quickly. Of specific concern to the town of Somerset is the fact that the Brightman Street Bridge is the preferred route to the nearest hospital and the primary crossing over the Taunton River.

Local and state governments in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts are also vehemently opposed to demolishing the Brightman Street Bridge. Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, Fall River Mayor Edward Lambert and elected officials from communities along the Taunton River have called for preserving and maintaining the Brightman Street Bridge.

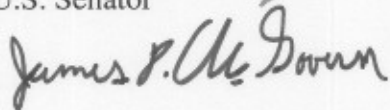
The Diaz-Balart amendment severely compromises the ability of public safety officials in the Fall River, Somerset, and the surrounding Southeastern Massachusetts region, to respond to emergencies. The Brightman Street Bridge is a critical piece of the transportation infrastructure in the region and demolishing it poses a significant threat to public safety. As such, we respectfully urge the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee defeat the Diaz-Balart amendment and ask that you contact us if we can provide additional support to this effort.

Chairman Oberstar
 RE: Diaz-Balart Amendment to HR 2701
 June 19, 2007

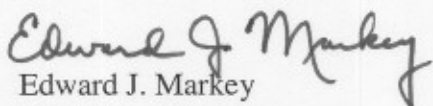
Sincerely,



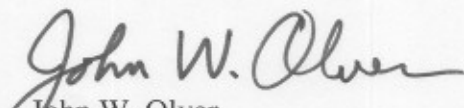
Edward M. Kennedy
 U.S. Senator



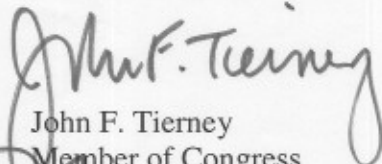
James P. McGovern
 Member of Congress



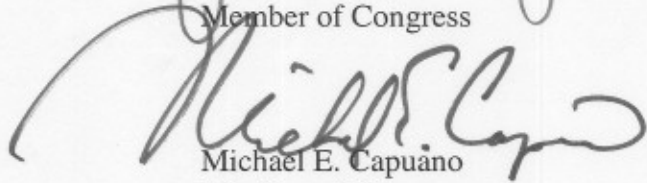
Edward J. Markey
 Member of Congress



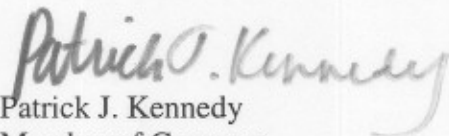
John W. Olver
 Member of Congress



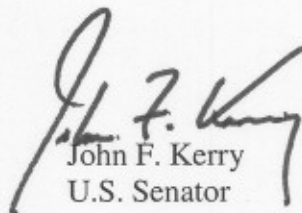
John F. Tierney
 Member of Congress



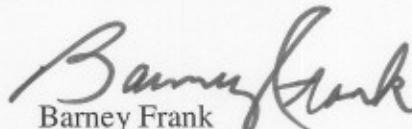
Michael E. Capuano
 Member of Congress



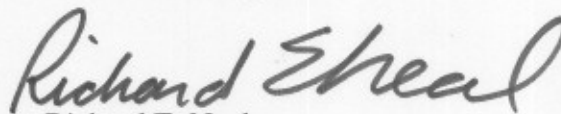
Patrick J. Kennedy
 Member of Congress



John F. Kerry
 U.S. Senator




Barney Frank
 Member of Congress



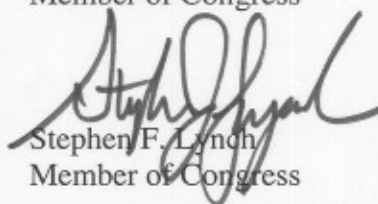
Richard E. Neal
 Member of Congress



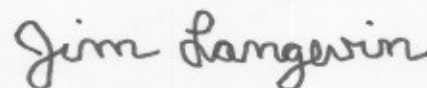
Martin T. Meehan
 Member of Congress



William D. Delahunt
 Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
 Member of Congress



James R. Langevin
 Member of Congress

cc: Ranking Member Mica and Members of the T&I Committee